

Department of State

§ 161.5

(a) *Responsible action officer* means the Department officer principally responsible for the preparation of action memoranda and other documents relating to a given Departmental action to which by these regulations apply. Ordinarily, the responsible action officer will be the country or office director whose office has action responsibility for a given action.

(b) *CEQ Regulations* means the regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, issued by the Council on Environmental Quality on November 29, 1978 (43 FR 55978-56007), and codified at 40 CFR parts 1500-1508.

(c) *United States* means the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and the other territories and possessions of the United States, including the territorial seas thereof. For the purpose of these regulations, actions having significant environmental effects on the resources of the U.S. continental shelf or resources of the U.S. Fishery Conservation Zone subject to the jurisdiction of the United States shall be considered to be actions having significant environmental effects in the United States.

(d) *Environmental document* means an environmental assessment, an environmental impact statement, a Finding of No Significant Impact or a Notice of Intent prepared under these regulations.

Subpart B—NEPA and Departmental Decisionmaking

§ 161.5 Major decision points and timing.

(a) The responsible action officer shall ensure compliance with these regulations at the earliest practicable stage of Departmental study, consideration or planning of a proposed major Federal action which could significantly affect the quality of the human environment. To accomplish this the responsible action officer must ensure that data developed during the review process is collected, analyzed and made available for consideration early in planning and decisionmaking when it

will be most valuable in formulating, reviewing and deciding upon proposals for Departmental action.

(b) Environmental analysis and review of a proposed Departmental action shall be conducted as early as practicable so as to be timely, yet late enough to be relevant to the decision-making.

(c) Environmental documents should, whenever possible, accompany the principal action memorandum relating to a proposed action. An environmental document required in conjunction with conclusion of an international agreement shall, where possible, be prepared and circulated for review and comment before final negotiations begin. The completed environmental document should thus ordinarily accompany the principal action memorandum or request for authority to negotiate an agreement under the Department's Circular 175 regulation (11 FAM 720).

(d) To the maximum extent possible an environmental document should be prepared before the establishment of a final United States position on a proposal. In such cases the document should indicate the alternatives under consideration without specifying a Departmental preference. If the content and dimensions of a proposed action will not be clear until after the conclusion of an international negotiation or if a decision to proceed on an action involving another nation or international organization is required on short notice and before the environmental document can be prepared, the environmental document should be prepared as soon as possible after the conclusion of an agreed text of a treaty or agreement on the proposed action. If the Senate's advice and consent to a treaty with potential significant environmental effects in the United States will be sought, the final environmental impact statement should accompany other decision documentation for ratification. Legislative environmental impact statements on proposed treaties or legislation shall conform to the requirements of § 1506.8 of the CEQ Regulations and must be prepared in time for Congressional hearings and deliberations.

(e) Because actions having effects on the United States may to varying degrees be initiated, influenced and conducted by other countries, it is recognized that the preparation of environmental documents for such actions must be adjusted to meet a variety of circumstances. Bearing in mind the degree to which other countries possess information on and the ability to affect the decision under consideration, responsible action officers shall seek at all times to prepare environmental analysis documents as early as feasible in the decisionmaking process.

§ 161.6 Responsibilities of departmental officials.

(a) *General.* As a general rule, responsibility for preparing environmental analysis documents will follow the Department's standard organizational practices; in this way environmental considerations and awareness of environmental responsibilities will be integrated most readily and effectively into the usual decisionmaking processes.

(1) *Departmental bureaus.* Each bureau within the Department shall be responsible for:

(i) Implementing these regulations and incorporating them into its normal decisionmaking processes;

(ii) Identifying actions it intends to initiate which may affect significantly the environment of the United States and employing the environmental evaluation procedures outlined in these regulations to ensure that necessary actions are taken to meet the requirements of applicable laws and regulations;

(iii) Coordinating environmental assessment-related activities for which it is responsible with the Office of Environment and Health in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs and supporting and assisting the Office of Environment and Health in implementing these regulations as required; and

(iv) Providing the personnel required to implement these regulations, informing the Office of Environment and Health and the Office of the Legal Adviser whenever it is anticipated that environmental documents will be prepared under these regulations, and con-

sulting the Office of Environment and Health and the Office of the Legal Adviser as necessary for guidance and assistance in the preparation of such documents.

(2) *Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.* Through its Office of Environment and Health the Bureau shall have the primary responsibility for ensuring the Department's compliance with environmental policies, regulations and procedures. It shall provide policy and professional direction and guidance within the Department for implementing these regulations. It shall also assist other bureaus in obtaining appropriate scientific advice and budgetary resources to implement the regulations. The Office of Environment and Health will act as the focal point for implementation, working closely with the Departmental bureaus and the Office of the Legal Adviser. The Bureau and other involved bureaus will work closely with the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations in the preparation of environmental documents relating to legislation. In carrying out its responsibilities the Bureau shall:

(i) Coordinate the formulation, development and revision of Departmental policies and positions on matters pertaining to environmental evaluation and review;

(ii) Develop and ensure the implementation of Departmentwide standards, procedures and working relationships for environmental review and compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations;

(iii) Develop, as an integral part of the Department's basic decision processes, procedures to ensure that environmental factors are properly considered in all relevant proposals and decisions;

(iv) Monitor these processes to ensure that Departmental procedures are achieving their purposes;

(v) Advise, assist and inform Departmental bureaus of the technical and management aspects of environmental analysis, and of the relevant expertise available in and outside the Department;